

Application Ser. No. 10/785,371  
GAU: 3729

Amendment B

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 4, and 6-7.

Please cancel Claims 8-20.

A marked up version of the modified claims starts on page 05 in accordance with 37 § CFR 1.121 as follows: The changes in any amended claims are shown by strikethrough (for deleted matter) and underlining (for added matter). The status of each claim is indicated adjacent the claim number.

Thereafter, starting on a separate page, (Page 07), is the Remarks portion in accordance with 37 CFR § 1.111.

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**Claims:**

1. (presently amended) A method for maintaining reliability of a ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board support apparatus, the method comprising the steps:

utilizing elongated support members to support a ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board during a solder paste application process used to apply solder paste onto said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board,

wherein said elongated support members are positioned in an array layout to support said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board, wherein each of the elongated support members are configured and held within apertures of a base member,

profiling said elongated support members by adjusting a vertical position of said elongated support members within said apertures in a manner to match a profile of said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board, and

deflecting said solder paste from impinging upon an interface between said elongated support member and said aperture of said base member using a protective collar.

2. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said protective collar is of a pliant material.

3. (presently amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of protecting said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board by utilizing a compliant material positioned on said elongated support members proximate a location where said elongated support members contact said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board.

4. (presently amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of protecting said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board by using said protective collar fabricated of a compliant material, and designing said protective collar to additionally

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comprise an area which covers a point of contact between said elongated support members and said ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board.

5. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said step of deflecting said solder paste from said interface between said elongated support member and said aperture of said base member using a protective collar, wherein said protective collar is fabricated as a feature of said elongated support member.

6. (presently amended) The method for maintaining reliability of a ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board support apparatus of Claim 1, ~~the method comprising the additional step of~~ further comprising a step of:

applying a holding force to said elongated support members in said profiled position.

7. (presently amended) The method for maintaining reliability of a ~~Printed Circuit Board~~ printed circuit board support apparatus of Claim 3, ~~the method comprising the additional step of~~ further comprising a step of:

applying a holding force to said elongated support members in said profiled position.

8-20. (Cancelled)